Parthenogenesis

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Parthenogenesis

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Summary

The creature is like nothing Hannibal has ever seen before. If he had to compare it to anything it almost looks like some sort of slug, though it is easily eight feet long and has more than enough strength to keep the man beneath it pinned. “Shit, Hannibal-” Will is feeling along the ground for some sort of makeshift weapon. “Is there a rock, a branch, anything- don’t get too close-” He’s trying to push the monster off of him now, but his hands only sink deep into the creature’s body as the soft flesh condenses.

Hannibal pretends to search, but he is focused on the way the creature moves, rippling and throbbing. It appears to be turning around, rotating until it lays perpendicular to Will’s prone form, holding him down by the midsection. If it’s attempting to eat the man, it’s being rather indirect about it.

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Will asks Hannibal to help him search for a wounded animal he heard the night before, except this time he wasn't hallucinating.

Notes

Well. I'm sure literally no one thought this but if anyone read Precipitate and went 'this seems like something that could have been posted as part of Just Fuck Me Up 2020 so why is it being posted three weeks before the event?'... this is why. This one was always my concept for the event, but they were absolutely written at the same time. In retrospect I could have saved both but ehh.

Anyways. Oviposition. No part of this is grounded in actual science or reality, though the title does refer to the very real and natural process of asexual reproduction. Like having unfertilized eggs ready to lay inside of a nice warm profiler. ANYWAYS.

As always, read the tags and please tell me if I've missed anything!

See the end of the work for more notes

Will Graham had always been a man full of surprises.

Every time Hannibal thought he knew what the man would do next, Will would find a way to turn it on its head. The dark thoughts he had shared in their sessions together, the way he seemed so certain about things no one could have possibly known, how one moment he would be confident and assured only to fold like a house of cards seconds later- the puzzle that was Will Graham was proving to be far more than simply diverting.

Hannibal thinks of nights ago, when he held the life of another in his hands, staring at Will and watching him stare *back.* There was a danger, in this game he was playing. There will always be danger in the unknown.

This morning, he finds himself picking carefully through the frosty undergrowth, searching with Will for something the man doesn't seem entirely sure will be found. "Could have been a coyote," he mutters off-handedly, "or something the coyotes got to."

"Are you expecting to find a corpse?"

The wording sends an obvious shudder through Will's frame. "Might not find anything more than a paw."

For a moment, Hannibal pauses. The wind changes and blows towards them, carrying on it a scent the likes of which he's never encountered. It is sweet, almost fevered, but not the same he's caught on Will in recent days.

Whatever the source, Will appears to be heading towards it. He does not notice.

"If you are expecting nothing more than a paw, perhaps I should be looking closer."

Will sighs. "I'm sure this seems ridiculous. I just don't want anything left that can attract predators."

"It does not seem ridiculous at all, Will. Though I must admit, I am curious as to why you have asked for my assistance in this particular endeavour."

"In case it's alive," Will deflects with a shrug. "Wrangling a wounded animal on your own is difficult."

The reasoning must be at least partially true, as Will had warned Hannibal ahead of time to wear clothes he didn't mind getting dirty. But, as always, there was more to it than that. "Most would not call their psychiatrist to search for a wounded animal in the snow."

"I thought we were just having conversations," Will grumbles. He is focused entirely on the ground.

"Will," Hannibal coaxes gently. "You know you can be honest with me."

Finally, the man halts. When he speaks, it's quiet. "I went looking for it last night," he whispers. "Didn't find anything."

"You are… unsure if what you heard was real or imagined," Hannibal extrapolates. Will gives him a quick, jerky nod.

Before either of them can continue, there is another gust of wind that brings with it a rustling. Will's head snaps towards the noise and he makes his way towards it.

Hannibal does not follow, only watches. The strange scent is increasing in strength. "What the hell is this?" Will murmurs, leaning down to touch the ground. When he straightens, his fingertips are dripping with some sort of viscous, clear fluid. "Slime…?"

The bush is moving violently, mere feet away, beyond Will's back. Hannibal glances between Will, somehow still oblivious, and the heaving form he can see hidden in the bush, watches it twitch and move and rear up, and only when he knows the man will not have time to react does he call out- "Will, behind you!"

Will spins just in time to see the creature leap out of the bush and knock him to the ground. Whatever it is, it's like nothing Hannibal has ever seen before. If he had to compare it to anything it almost looks like some sort of slug, though it is easily eight feet long and has more than enough strength to keep the man beneath it pinned. "Shit, Hannibal-" Will is feeling along the ground for some sort of makeshift weapon. "Is there a rock, a branch, anything- don't get too close-" He's trying to push the monster off of him now, but his hands only sink deep into the creature's body as the soft flesh condenses.

Hannibal pretends to search, but he is focused on the way the creature moves, rippling and throbbing. It appears to be turning around, rotating until it lays perpendicular to Will's prone form, holding him down by the midsection. If it's attempting to eat the man, it's being rather indirect about it.

As if on cue, the portion closest to Will's head stretches out, a long, tube-like object popping free. His hands fly up to try and push the object away but it only extends further, winding through his hands and pressing to his lips. He grits his teeth to keep it out. The creature seems to be more intelligent than either of them assume because it bears down on Will's stomach, eliciting a gasp of pain, and exploits the opening to shove the object inside.

Will kicks out his legs, struggling futilely as the tube slides further and further down his throat. It appears to be large enough that he cannot muster the force required to bite down, stretching his jaw open wide. His eyes are wide and blinking rapidly, tears forming at the corners. "Tilt your head back," Hannibal instructs him, enraptured by the events taking place before him. "You have a much higher chance of escaping unscathed if you make the passageway as straight as possible."

The man makes a strangled, broken noise, but tilts his head back nonetheless. He halts his struggling, tries to make himself as still as possible. If it isn't planning on killing him, cooperation yields the highest chance of survival.

Above him, the creature resettles as it feeds more of the tube inside. The end of the tube where it vanishes back into the bulk of the creature swells as something emerges, traveling down towards Will, who twitches violently as it passes into his mouth. Hannibal's eyes are locked on the tube, the way it bulges into spheres that each pass down and into Will. "It's laying eggs," he murmurs. It draws another choked-off whine out of the man pinned to the forest floor.

At the noise, Hannibal's eyes fall down to the trembling body beneath the creature, causing a sharp intake of breath. Drool and slime are slipping out of Will's mouth and down his cheeks as he shudders violently. Every so often his entire body bucks dramatically and the creature pins him down more tightly in response. Hannibal's gaze tracks to the man's throat, where he can see the bulges as the eggs travel down into his stomach. He swallows heavily. Will is looking towards him, eyes blank and glassy with tears, until a particularly violent shudder sends them rolling almost entirely back into his skull as more and more of the eggs are pumped inside of him.

Gradually, the shuddering and twitching stops. The creature might very well kill Will by mistake at this rate. The thought of it, of Will bred so violently that he suffocates, sends such a sharp pulse of arousal through Hannibal that he very nearly collapses to the ground. This is not the time- it would not do to be caught unawares and bred by the creature next, after all.

The creature quivers, and a glance at the ovipositor shows no new bumps in it forming. "It is almost finished, Will," Hannibal says, unsure if the man is even conscious anymore. His body twitches when his name is called, so at the very least he remains alive. "Try to stay awake." He watches as the last of the eggs slip down Will's throat and into his stomach, where Hannibal can see the subtlest bulge where the eggs sit inside the man. Once the eggs have all been deposited the slug slowly and carefully pulls the ovipositor back inside of its body and finally retreats, leaving Will motionless on the ground.

For several long moments Will does not move, and then he is rolling over onto his front so suddenly that it nearly startles Hannibal. He retches, over and over until he starts to vomit, all of the eggs and slime pouring back out of him and forming a pile in the snow and dirt. Will vomits until all that comes up is slime and bile, dripping out of his mouth, plastering his curls to the sides of his face. "Will," Hannibal calls out, backing away from where the monster has lain down in the snow. "It's backed away. Come this way, towards my voice."

Will stands and takes several unsteady steps in the general direction of Hannibal before collapsing back down to his hands and knees, no more than a foot from the pile he has left behind him. His upper body is slick with the slime as well. Behind him, the creature moves once more, forward to inspect the eggs Will's body had rejected. "Quickly," Hannibal urges, walking backwards as slowly as he is willing to risk.

"I-I can't-" Will rasps, throat raw and abused. "I'm trying, I-"

And then the creature is on him again, pressing his body flat to the ground. Will tries to find purchase in the dirt, leaving furrows as it drags him backwards until his entire lower body is hidden underneath the bulk of the creature. "Shotgun," he rushes out, "I have a shotgun, upstairs in the closet, the ammo is locked up, code is-" A tendril emerges out of the slug,

ending in a sharp stinger, and it burrows into Will's neck to inject him. He cries out in shock. "Ah- code is- 4135. Hannibal, *hurry."*

The house is close enough that Hannibal reaches it in less than a minute running. Will's dogs are crowded around the front door, whining and sniffing at him curiously. He is careful not to let any of them out. The closet in question along with the gun inside is easy to locate, the locked safe nearby. A quick check confirms the gun is unloaded. Hannibal slips the shells into his pocket, leaving the gun empty, and runs back outside. After all, he doesn't want to miss whatever is happening to poor Will.

He smells what is occurring before he quite realizes it. Will is where he left him, the creature apparently only wanting to reposition the man instead of dragging him off to its den, and the sweet smell of the creature is mingling with something sharper- arousal.

Will's body, while mostly covered, is angled in a way that suggests he is on his knees beneath the creature, upper body still pressed against the ground. His face is flushed and his mouth is hanging open as he pants, eyes half-lidded and glazed in pleasure. The creature's powerful thrusts force his entire body forward as it fucks him.

"This is- unexpected," Hannibal murmurs, edging closer to where the creature has mounted Will. Neither party seems to notice him. "I suppose it has injected you with some sort of arousal-enhancing substance to make you more accepting of its clutch. Quite a curious behavior." Whether the creature is so absorbed in what it is doing or simply does not mind the third party, Hannibal is able to get close enough to kneel before Will and place a hand on the man's cheek. The contact seems to startle Will out of his reverie- he shivers, and his eyes track up to meet Hannibal's.

"Hannibal," he gasps, breathy and tinged with arousal. It sends a shiver down Hannibal's spine. "It- I-"

"Hush," Hannibal soothes gently. "I do not think we need to fear it harming you. Not when you are taking it so beautifully." Will's hands move from where they had been fisting in the dirt to grip tightly at Hannibal's wrist.

"I can't- it feels-"

"Does it feel good?" Hannibal whispers, and Will answers with a sob. "Do not feel ashamed," he chastises. "It wants you to feel good. Let it, Will."

Will tilts his head to hide his face in the crook of his elbow as the creature fucks him, smothering the moans and grunts of pleasure. The action displeases Hannibal, and he sets the gun down to fist a hand through Will's curls and tilt his head up, exposing him. "There is nothing to hide from," Hannibal tells him. "I said you could tell me anything, did I not?"

"It-" Speaking seems to be difficult for Will, and he struggles to get the words out. "It feels so good," he finally admits.

"Has it made you come?" Shakily, Will nods. "Are you going to come again?" Another hiccupping sob, along with a nod. Hannibal places both of his hands along Will's jaw, makes

the man look up and into his eyes. “Show me,” he whispers.

The man has always been beautiful, but seeing Will orgasm is a form of art. His breathing picks up and then stutters, mouth falling open as his eyes flutter almost entirely closed while the waves of pleasure take him over. He seems to go somewhere else, relaxing so completely and trustingly into Hannibal’s grip like a tamed animal. It’s an incredible sight, one Hannibal very suddenly does not want to share with anybody else.

Above Will, the creature ripples threateningly, reminding Hannibal that they are not alone. “Do you want to lay?” he asks it. Carefully, he releases Will and picks the gun back up and backs away. “My apologies. Proceed.” Once he is what the creature seems to consider a safe distance away, it pushes forward with a particularly powerful thrust that makes Will gasp before stilling. Will is held quite firmly beneath it, his noises the only real indication that the creature is laying eggs at all. He shudders and whines pitifully, shifting uncomfortably as he is filled. It is a much slower process this time without the risk of smothering the man, something the creature had apparently been aware of the first time around.

This time, when the creature releases Will, it backs much further away, allowing Hannibal to get close enough to help the other man up. The back of his pants and underwear have been almost entirely torn away to grant the creature access. Copious amounts of slime are dripping down the man’s legs and out of his ass. Hannibal does not allow himself a closer look. Will has to lean on him heavily, breathing unsteady, but they are able to safely hobble away. The creature does not stop them, only watches silently to ensure its eggs remain where it has left them.

Once they reach the house, Hannibal manages to get Will inside without any of the dogs slipping away. “Get them out,” the man has begun muttering. “Out, they need to be out, I need to get them *out* .”

“I agree,” Hannibal grunts, shouldering the bathroom door open and closing it behind them before a dog makes it inside. “It would not be wise to wait and see how the creature’s young hatch. I need to undress you, Will.”

“Just *get them out,*” the man hisses. He is shaking and cannot do much to assist Hannibal in stripping him down. Once his shirt and jacket have been removed, Hannibal pauses- there is a much more visible bulge in the man’s stomach area, where the eggs must be. He resumes his ministrations before the other man notices.

There is a non-trivial amount of semen sticking to the front of Will’s underwear when he removes them. Hannibal runs a finger through it and brings it to his mouth- Will is far too out of it to notice, anyways. It tastes alarmingly good.

Hannibal helps Will into the bathtub, filling it partway with hot water first. “Don’t-” Will starts to say, his mouth flying shut. He swallows heavily. “Please don’t watch me do this.”

“I’m certainly not going to leave,” Hannibal says evenly. “You can barely sit up.”

“I know, just-” Will groans, and rolls over into a kneeling position. “Please, Hannibal.”

“It would be wise to have someone supervising, so to say,” Hannibal scowls. Will probably assumes it is a purely medical concern. “But very well.” Hannibal turns away from Will to allow him to expel the eggs in relative privacy.

It seems that Will has either forgotten or not considered his bathroom mirror. Hannibal moves to the sink, and with minimal shifting he finds the right angle to show him everything. While Will’s direct actions are obscured by the edges of the bathtub, his motions are unmistakable, and the eggs apparently float. They look vaguely like the eggs of a frog, the soft, translucent spheres connected together in sections with some sort of membrane. He seems to be able to grab ahold of the end of one string and gently pull them out, albeit slowly. When he glances towards Will’s face he expects to see the man’s brow furrowed in concentration.

His breath, again, catches, because instead he sees his face slack with pleasure. Hannibal’s hands tighten on the sink. He cannot turn, not without Will asking him to, unless he wants to shatter what fragile trust exists between them. So he simply stands and stares, focusing on the man’s face, the way it strains and then softens, the way he bites down hard on his lip to keep the noises he wants to make inside until it’s raw and bleeding.

It feels like it goes on for an eternity, and he is so engrossed he does not hear Will’s words so much as see the way his mouth moves. “Hannibal,” he calls weakly. “I- I need help.”

“Of course,” Hannibal responds, careful to keep his voice even. “Is it out of reach?”

When he turns, it’s in time to catch Will flushing and nodding slowly. “Do you have- I don’t know, tongs or something?”

“I do not want to risk rupturing one.” He kneels beside the sink, erection safely hidden by the walls of the tub. “Please, on your back. Allow me to try.”

“No,” Will says immediately, though he does turn and lean his back against the tub. “There’s no way- I can’t ask you to do this.”

“Will, I was a surgeon for a great many years. I assure you, I have seen and done far worse.” Hannibal rolls up his sleeves. He should probably wear gloves, but makes no movements to find any or put them on. “Pull your legs up and hold them against your chest. You may close your eyes if you find it too uncomfortable.”

After a long moment of hesitation Will closes his eyes and folds his legs up against his chest, hooking his arms under his knees to keep them in place. “Think of your stream,” Hannibal offers, somewhat cruelly as he has no intention of letting Will lose focus long enough to escape the situation. He leans forward and slips both hands beneath the water, past the layer of eggs floating along the top. One hand feels along Will’s thigh and travels to his pelvis, taking care to bump against the man’s erection as he goes. “Apologies,” he murmurs as Will hisses with both pleasure and displeasure. The hand moves further up, settling below his belly button. The swell has vanished entirely. With his other hand he feels further down, until he finds Will wet and open, slipping his pointer and middle fingers inside. They slide deep and find nothing. “You are certain more remains?”

“Yes,” Will pants. He is concentrating hard, likely on trying to be somewhere else. Hannibal presses down with the hand on you outside, massaging gently, trying to coax the eggs down.

Hannibal pulls his hand back and slides in his ring finger as well. Will twitches around him, but he is still relaxed from whatever the creature had injected him with earlier and accepts them easily. “Did pushing help?”

“No.” Will bucks upwards when Hannibal brushes against his prostate as he moves deeper, murmuring more apologies. “N-No, if I tried to force it they- stuck in place,” he gasps.

“Hmm.” Hannibal presses down harder, trying to slide the eggs low enough to grab. “I may have to do something drastic, I’m afraid.”

“Anything,” Will whimpers. “Please, just get them out of me.”

Hannibal stiffens, and he feels his cock jump in his slacks. “Very well.” He cannot rush this, needs it to seem natural, and so he pulls back and slides in his pinky as well, watching as Will’s head falls back against the wall. He can slide a bit deeper, now, continuing to massage from the outside, and swallows his disappointment when he finally feels the slimy edges of the membrane against the tips of his fingers. “I can feel them,” he sighs, and Will lets out a sob of relief.

“C-Can you grab them?”

“I believe so.” The external contact appears to be helping, slowly sliding them down until he can carefully pinch them between his two longest fingers. “I have them.” He won’t let Will off this easily, however. “I want to be certain they do not split further,” he says slowly. Gradually, he pulls them down until he can grasp them with all four fingers. His other hand trails down, fingers circling around the base of Will’s cock, causing the man to inhale sharply. “This aided their insertion, and may aid in their removal as well.”

The air sits heavy and silent between them, until Will, eyes still closed, almost imperceptibly nods. Unseen above him, Hannibal smiles.

He does not draw it out, jerks Will off quickly and harshly until the man beneath him is trembling and shaking, and then coming with a weak cry. The way the man clenches around him, burning hot, feels heavenly, and for a moment Hannibal forgets what he was supposed to be doing entirely. He regains himself, and quickly and carefully eases the last string of eggs out of Will.

“That should be the last of it,” he comments, only to look up and find Will has passed out, still with the iron grip around his knees. Hannibal watches him fondly before stretching the man out, allowing his limbs to relax in the water.

He shifts on his knees, reminding himself of his own discomfort. What better time to ease it, with Will well and truly dead to the world? It takes seconds to undo his belt and slip his hand inside his pants, gripping himself firmly. He looks at Will’s face, thinks back to when he thought the man might die, and bucks forward into his own hand. The way his eyes had rolled back into his head had almost looked pleasurable, like he was overwhelmed by the

sensation- and then later, while the creature fucked him, when he held Hannibal's gaze as he came, when he tried to hide how much he felt it and then came with Hannibal's fingers buried deep inside his ass-

Hannibal comes quicker than he has in his entire life, and can't even bring himself to be embarrassed about it. He pulls his hand back out of his pants, sticky with semen, looks at Will laying in the bathtub, and pauses. The man needs to be bathed anyways. What's one more thing? He raises his hand up, holds it above Will's tilted-back head, and drips his semen onto the sleeping man's lips.

Will's tongue darts out to sweep the fluid away, and he shifts with a groan. Hannibal falls still, watching Will closely, but the man does not appear to wake up. The creature's venom affects him deeply, it seems.

When Hannibal drops his fingers closer, Will's mouth falls open at the slightest touch. Hannibal pours his semen into the unconscious man's mouth, and Will licks his fingers clean.

If he had been much younger, Hannibal may have been waylaid for quite some time longer. Instead, he tears himself away from the other man, as he has work to do.

The first thing he does is cancel his appointments for the day. Some searching around the house and property produces a large metal basin, probably something Will uses to wash his dogs. It should hold the eggs just fine. He goes back out into the forest first, finding the pile of vomited eggs and scooping them into the basin. The creature seems to have vanished.

He washes the eggs in the sink, filling the basin with warm water before dropping the cleaned eggs inside and hauling it into the bathroom where Will still lays limp in the bathtub. He scoops those eggs out and adds them to the others, pushing the full basin off to the side and focusing his attention back onto Will. Before draining the water he scrubs away most of the slime, finishing the job only once the bathtub has been filled with a second batch of substantially cleaner water. He lifts Will out and leaves the dirty water for the moment. Will is not a small man, but Hannibal has no difficulty maneuvering him around to dry him and carry him out of the bathroom. Pajamas don't seem to be something Will owns, so he puts nothing more than a pair of underwear on the man before laying him down in his bed. The dogs jump up immediately- it is very likely that Will does not allow them up here, but Hannibal thinks an exception can be made.

While Will sleeps, Hannibal scrubs the bathtub clean, makes a meal that can be easily reheated, and tends to the dogs when needed. He finds a book and settles in to wait for Will to rouse.

When the man wakes it's to sit bolt upright in bed, sweating and panting as his pulse races. It's out of fear, clearly, but Hannibal is fascinated to find that Will's reactions to both pleasure and terror and nearly indistinguishable. He closes his book and sets it to the side, watching as the younger man's head whips back and forth to scan the room before he pulls his knees up to his chest, drops his head down and anchors his hands in his hair. "Will," Hannibal calls gently. "How are you feeling?"

"I don't know," Will is rambling. "I don't know I don't know I don't-"

“Will,” Hannibal calls again, this time standing and making his way to the bed. He lays a reassuring hand on the man’s shoulder, tightening when it draws out a violent flinch. “You are safe now.”

“What was that?” The hands fall away and Will looks upwards, towards Hannibal, eyes desperate and shining with tears. “What *happened?* ”

The normally closed-off empath looks shattered, openly distraught, staring at Hannibal like he’s the only one who can save him. It’s intoxicating, both the broken look on the man’s face and the absolute blind trust he has in a different sort of predator entirely, simply because it saved him from another. While it would have pleased Hannibal before as well, now, it brings with it an emotion Hannibal has not felt in a long time, shadows of affection and possession in kind. “Are you searching for reassurance or honesty?”

At that, a sliver of a smile flashes across Will’s face, false and performative. “From you? The latter.”

He wants to push- *what exactly is that supposed to mean, Will?*- but the urge passes. He drops his hand from Will's shoulder and steps back. “How much do you remember?”

Will turns away. “More than I’d like to.”

Hannibal hums thoughtfully, deciding a direct approach would be the most successful. “You were attacked by an unknown organism and it bred you. Laid eggs inside of your body, to be specific. Once finished it appears to have left, and all of the eggs have been removed.”

Briefly, Will stiffens, and then a shudder rips its way through the man. “I was hoping you would tell me I had lost time again, spouted nonsense about being attacked.”

“Unfortunately, this really happened. If you desire solid proof, the eggs are sitting in a pail in your bathroom.”

Will actually *heaves* at that. “They’re-” He gags again. “You didn’t *get rid of them?* They’re in my *house?* ”

They’ve been somewhere far more intimate than your home, Hannibal wants to point out, but he refrains. “I thought it unwise to blindly attempt to dispose of them, as we have no way of knowing what danger they may pose.”

“Just bury them in a pit outside.”

“Would you risk them hatching and invading your home further?”

Will falls silent. He turns back towards Hannibal but does not actually look anywhere near his face. “The monster, you said it…”

“When I went to collect the eggs that remained outside, it had vanished. If we are lucky then it left to die.”

“Fuck,” Will whimpers, crumpling. “Hannibal, what if it comes back? What the fuck do I do then?”

“I see no reason why it would search you out specifically,” Hannibal lies. Will had been a successful mating partner and the creature had every reason to seek him out again. The main obstacle here was if the slug-like monster was intelligent enough to realize as much. “As long as you exercise caution on your walks, you will be fine.”

The look Will’s face would have inspired pity in a normal man. He looks like his world has ended; his boat, the one thing that made him feel safe, has sunken to the ocean floor.

Perhaps, if Hannibal is lucky, Will will seek to rebuild that sense of safety with another. It is far more likely that the man will simply suffer in silence. Either way- patience is a virtue Hannibal has in spades.

After a long silence, Will speaks. “How do we get rid of them?”

We, Hannibal is pleased to hear. Will has already gone so far as to assume his continued assistance. “Do you truly wish them to be destroyed?”

Will looks at him like Hannibal just tried to tell him the sky was green. “Of course.”

Hannibal had a long while to think of just how best to phrase this. “Would that not be a loss to science?”

“Excuse me?”

“This is a previously undiscovered life-form. Do you not think it should be studied, particularly if it poses a danger to humans?”

He knows Will sees his point from the scowl that he wears. “I’m not keeping them.”

“You do not have to. I will take them.”

Again, Will is struck silent. “With all due respect, Hannibal, you’re a *psychiatrist* .”

“And former surgeon.”

“Notice how that’s still not anything approaching a biologist?”

“I am not saying I will research them myself, Will. I am more than capable of finding the right person to pass them to.”

“I-” Will’s mouth clamps shut and he turns away. “Fine. I just want them gone.”

Hannibal's mouth twitches up at the corners but he stifles the smile.

He has coolers in his trunk, as always, and they come in handy in a different way than usual. As Will watches impassively from the bed, Hannibal takes them into the bathroom, fills them

with water and is able to fit all the eggs inside the various boxes. Once he puts them safely in his trunk he returns inside. “Is there anything you would like me to do for you?”

Will looks haggard, like the fight has been well and truly beat out of him. It is entirely possible that it has been.

Or fucked out of him, at the very least. Hannibal would be entirely fine with that development.

The empath shakes his head. “Just- I think I want to be alone.”

“Very well. If you need any assistance or something happens, do not hesitate to call.” He turns to leave.

Before he gets to the door, Will’s voice stops him. “Hannibal, wait.” Hannibal turns, and waits. “I, uh. Thank you.” Quite fetchingly, a lovely blush is blooming across the man’s cheeks. “I can’t really thank you enough for everything you did to help me.” The blush darkens and Will tilts his head down in a futile effort to hide it.

“No thanks are necessary. I am certain you would have done the same for me.”

That darkens the flush further- an interesting reaction, and something he should examine later, with less distractions. “Yeah. Uh. Please don’t-”

“I will not tell anyone unless you wish me to.” Truthfully, he’s not sure he would share it even then. The thought of others seeing, even *knowing* what Hannibal had witnessed is intolerable.

For now.

Will releases him with a slow nod.

Something halts Hannibal before he reaches his Bentley. A strange sheen on the ground, a trail leading directly underneath the vehicle itself. He glances back towards the house, confirming Will remains unaware inside, and kicks a rock into the darkness. No reaction.

As quickly as possible, Hannibal climbs into the driver’s seat and closes the door behind him, thankfully uninterrupted. He quietly pulls the car forward, leaves it idling, and steps back out to examine what he has uncovered.

The creature lays beneath, obviously dead. Will would be relieved to know, endlessly grateful, his fears assuaged. His boat would never truly sail again, but it could at least regain the ability to float.

Hannibal opens the trunk and hauls the corpse inside, closing it and driving off without another word.

Hannibal, obviously, does not give the eggs to anyone other than himself. Why on earth would he freely give away something so precious? He heads to his locked basement the moment he returns home, taking as many precautions as he can when he puts an egg on the metal table and takes a scalpel to it. The liquid that bursts forth does not appear to be immediately harmful, though he is careful to ensure none of it touches him, both now and as he cleans the room later. More importantly- at the center, thrashing weakly, sits a tiny, barely formed organism, dying on the table.

The eggs are alive.

He takes a gamble, setting up a pool of water for them to rest in, one that pays off when he cuts open another egg a week later and finds that not only have they survived, they appear to be growing. Pleased, he installs a more permanent fixture, connecting it to the same filtration system the pond in his garden uses. He builds a wall, clear plastic and dotted with breathing holes, a door he can also open remotely serving as the only entrance. It would not do to have them escape upon hatching, after all.

His patient, Franklyn, vanishes, along with his friend- Budge, Hannibal recalls. He wonders if it may have ended differently if Will had been well enough to work the case.

The eggs hatch, producing a great number of tiny, slug-like creatures. They feast on the corpse of the adult he had left in with them. They are smaller than the holes in the wall and so Hannibal adds another, creating what is effectively a vestibule, this one something they cannot escape. Regardless, they remain mostly in the pond, apparently semi-aquatic as he had guessed.

Hannibal's original plans for Will fall to the wayside. When the profiler finally admits to hallucinations and losing time, Hannibal arranges an MRI and allows the encephalitis to be found and treated. Allowing the man the full use of his formidable mental facilities is a risk but Will is nothing but grateful and trusting, even bringing his psychiatrist a nice bottle of wine when he has his first appointment after being released from the hospital. If he looks deeper and sees any of Hannibal's darkness, it never seems to solidify into anything more.

He hadn't considered trust as a way to blind the empath, but it appears to be working just as well as the brain infection would have. Will softens fractionally as time passes, both from further interaction with Hannibal and relief at the continued absence of the monster. He wants to see the light of understanding in those eyes but is content to settle for muted affection.

The slugs grow larger and decrease in number, likely eating themselves. On a whim, after Hannibal butchers a corpse he tosses the remains inside, coming back in the morning to find them devoured.

Next time, the person he throws in is still alive, and eaten all the same.

His experiments distract him. He has taken to feeding his victims a slug, waiting to see if their body rejects it, and only once three have emerged unharmed does he sample one himself. It tastes similar to oyster, without the sharp taste of brine. He begins serving them at his dinner parties, artfully placed into empty shells, though he is very careful to never serve them to Will. It would be unfortunate if the man recognized the taste.

During an investigation he is so mentally preoccupied that he lets slip information he should not have, and Jack notices. An excuse is on the tip of his tongue when, astonishingly, Will steps forward to defend him, and Jack accepts it with a huff. It remains unclear if Will truly believes the lies he offered or if he was simply covering for the other man. How curious it would be if it was the latter.

In his basement, the slugs grow quickly. He wants to allow them time to mature and hopefully get more meat but it backfires and most of them eat each other, even when plenty of food is offered. When they are roughly the size of a house cat, he turns them into pies. The size of a large dog, a hearty chowder, not the clam he tells his guests it is.

Six months from the start of his experiment, the day Will was attacked, and three of them have made it to maturity. Not much later their behavior changes, they become more restless and agitated, swelling on the bottom end- eggs. They want to mate.

He tosses a human inside and watches in dismay as they are ripped apart and devoured.

Nothing seems to work. He throws in people of all genders, races and ages, provided they are adults. One of the slugs dies, and when he cuts it open to recover the eggs, he finds those are dead as well.

It's possible Will in some way resembled whatever they typically used to mate, so he finds people with brown, curling hair, strikingly beautiful, and watches as those get torn to pieces as well.

When the second slug dies, he does something drastic.

Will wonders if he should have brought something.

Hannibal had invited him on very late notice (and apologized profusely for it) but it wasn't like Will had plans of his own so he had fed his dogs and made sure they had everything they may need for the night before locking his house and driving over to Hannibal's for dinner.

It's because he wants to be prepared, he tells himself. Anything could happen. He could get into a car accident on the way over and end up in the hospital. He could simply have too much to drink and spend the night in a guest bedroom- embarrassingly, it's happened before.

It is *not,* he reassures himself, because he's becoming increasingly more aware of the way Hannibal looks at him, and the fact that he doesn't seem to mind it. Hannibal makes him feel… safe, in a way he hasn't felt before.

The older man opens the door to greet him with a smile, sleeves rolled up and apron around his waist. "Will, welcome. Thank you for coming on such short notice- I suddenly felt the urge to cook a feast."

“I think I’d drive across the country for your cooking,” Will answers with a grin. Hannibal reaches for his coat, hanging it in the closet after Will shrugs out of it. He feels the man’s eyes track over him appreciatively.

It’s not like he dresses up for dinner with Hannibal, but the man appreciates neatness and he doesn’t want to turn up in a fraying flannel. He follows the man into the kitchen, taking in the food in various stages of preparation. Hannibal wasn’t kidding- there is a fair amount covering the counters. “What would you have done if I hadn’t been free?”

“Saved it, I suppose.” No mention of an attempt to invite another. Will swallows.

“Anything I can do to help?” He’d played sous chef before and liked to think he was getting better at it.

Hannibal glances around the room before speaking. “Actually, I had intended to pair the meal with a young Bordeaux that I seem to have forgotten to bring up. It needs to breathe- if you do not mind, could you run down to the basement to fetch it?”

Will tilts his head to the side, somewhat surprised by the request. Hannibal always kept his wine cellar locked- *a habit from when I had less secure lodgings, the man had told him*- and never seemed particularly keen on letting anyone inside. “Of course. What am I looking for?”

After being given a quick explanation, both of the location and appearance of the bottle itself, Will finds himself heading down a stairway and opening the door into a room he’s always, on some level, been curious about.

Most of the basement appears to be shrouded in shadow, something that likely should have thrown up red flags to Will, but he locates the clear wall Hannibal had described to him and makes his way towards it. The wine should be just through there. As he gets closer he notices a second wall just beyond, door on the opposite end, forming a vestibule. It’s odd, and Will’s hair stands up on the back of his neck, but he steps through the open doorway nonetheless.

Just as he sees something shifting in the darkness the door behind him swings shut and he hears the unmistakable sound of a lock sliding in place.

“Shit,” he hisses, spinning around and pulling on the door to no avail. It’s probably some sort of anti-theft measure, something Hannibal had forgotten to deactivate, he could just call the man to come let him out-

But Hannibal doesn’t forget anything, not even a bottle of wine, and Will’s phone is safely tucked away in the pocket of his jacket, hanging in the closet upstairs.

“ *Shit,”* he repeats, how could he have fallen for such a blatant ploy, how the *hell* had he let himself walk straight into the obvious trap? Did he really trust Hannibal that blindly? A thump against the wall behind him catches his attention and he spins around, freezing totally in place as his blood turns to ice in his veins.

Against the clear wall he sees a carbon copy of the monster that raped and bred him, pressed against the barrier that suddenly seems flimsy and insignificant. Several tentacle-like

protrusions are sliding through what he now understands are air holes, grasping for Will. One of them ends in a sharp stinger.

He presses himself flat against the wall behind him, thankfully out of reach. His heart rate picks up and his breathing comes faster, his panic so great that he does not even hear Hannibal approaching until the man speaks.

“It certainly does not seem like it wants to eat you,” he says thoughtfully.

“Hannibal, this isn’t funny,” Will growls. “Let me out of here.”

“Why on earth would I do that?”

Will’s body goes cold. “What do you want from me?”

Behind him, he hears Hannibal sigh. “William, I understand that you are frightened, but that should not make you stupid.”

The creature is still reaching for him, shifting across the wall, and he sees the way the bottom part of it swells. “Is this why I haven’t seen it again? Where the fuck did you find it?”

“I am afraid the previous one is dead. My theory was correct- it died the day it laid the last of its eggs.”

Will sucks in a quick breath. The monster has been dead this entire time, and Hannibal *knew about it.* “You knew, this whole time you fucking knew and didn’t tell-”

“That is correct. This one is its offspring, raised from the very eggs it left you. In a way, I suppose that makes this your child.”

A wave of nausea overtakes Will but he cannot bend over to retch lest the creature finally grab him. “Hannibal, please, *please,* just let me out of here. We can talk about this.”

“I’m afraid I cannot do that. All of the others have died. Only this one remains, and this is the first time it has shown any interest in the mating options I have offered it.”

Will’s pulse is racing. “No, no, Hannibal, please, I’m begging you-”

“It must be some sort of genetic memory. The parent paired with you successfully and the offspring grew to maturity, so it recognizes you as a viable breeding partner.”

“-no, Hannibal, I’ll do anything you want, please, just don’t make me do through this again-”

“Oh?” Hannibal steps closer, voice lowering. “But you seemed to enjoy it so much the first time.”

And Will’s entire body falls still as his mouth goes dry, because he *had.* He’s never felt that good in his entire life, and trust him- he’s been trying ever since.

Another step as Hannibal moves closer still. “It will not harm you, Will. It would not risk losing the one safe place it can lay its clutch. Do you remember how it felt? When it stung you and mounted you on the forest floor.”

“I. I don’t-”

“It must have felt incredible, based on how you reacted to it. Do you dream of it, Will?”

He does, and often. When he dreams of the slug and what it did to him he wakes sweaty and panting and it isn’t from fear. Slowly, barely, he nods.

“This is entirely safe and benefits the both of us. I will get a new clutch of eggs and you will finally, *finally* get to feel that blinding pleasure once more.” A final step, and now Hannibal stands so close that Will can feel his body heat behind him. “All you need do is open that door.”

A full body shudder rips through Will. “I, I can’t, the eggs-”

“I am more than happy to assist you once more, Will.”

Everything feels so hot, Hannibal behind him like a brand, the slug bracketing him in from the front, the low pulses of arousal from within. “You swear to me,” he whispers. “After this you won’t- feed me to it, or just leave me in there permanently. You’ll get me out of there and you’ll *help me.* ”

When the answer comes, it’s a low, sultry purr. “I promise you.”

It feels like someone else is controlling his body. Slowly, Will pulls himself away from the wall, steps closer to the second door, tilting away from the grasping tentacles as he leans forward. For just a moment, he hesitates, and then he reaches out and unbolts the lock on the door.

The door swings open under the weight of the slug and Will instantly regrets his decision. He can’t run, not when he’s trapped like this, but he bolts to the door between him and freedom and rattles it, eyes flicking upwards to meet Hannibal’s blank expression. The man has taken several steps back and now watches with his hands linked behind his back, still wearing exactly what Will had last seen him wearing in the kitchen. Will opens his mouth, intending to try and beg for release once more, but then the heavy weight of the monster on his back is pressing him forwards, into the wall, the stinger is sliding into his neck, and his body goes lax as that delicious warmth floods into him.

He can feel the ovipositor, covered in the same slime the rest of the monster is, pressing harshly against his ass, obstructed by his clothes. It would rip through eventually, something he knows from personal experience, but there’s no real reason to ruin another pair of pants, is there? As quickly as he can manage he undoes his belt, grabs the edge of his pants and underwear together, pushing it down to bare himself. The movement diverts a thrust from the monster and the ovipositor slips upwards, leaving a trail of slime along his back, before it finally pulls back and drives into him in one fluid movement. He barely gets his pants halfway down his thighs when all coordination and higher thoughts flee him entirely.

The strangest thing about it is this ovipositor actually *feels* different from the first one, more slender but reaching further inside. It thrusts into him, one powerful movement, jolting him painfully against the clear wall, so he brings his hands up to brace himself, palms against the flat surface planted on either side of his neck. When it thrusts, the creature's body doesn't move much, simply pulling the thick tube back into its body and forcing it back out. Distantly, he wonders if it's due to the much tighter quarters. The first one fucked him much closer to what could be considered normally.

Will's mouth drops open, moans and grunts of pleasure slipping out of him. On the other side of the barrier Hannibal has shifted, moved to remain directly in front of Will, watching openly. It isn't like before, when the bulk of the creature had concealed what was happening- he's on full display now, hips pulled back, hard cock pressed against the glass, the ovipositor vanishing into his body clearly visible. For some reason the knowledge that this time, everything can be seen, only makes him harder. He sees Hannibal's gaze lower and then it's too much and he closes his eyes, focusing on the sensations and letting himself *feel* it.

It feels burning hot inside him, though if it's the actual temperature of the organ or simply a product of the aphrodisiac running through his system, Will does not know. All he knows is that it fills him perfectly, rushing out and back in, thrusting so deeply that he *knows* it has to be curving inside of him. It should be painful with how far it slams into him and he wonders if all pain would be like this or just what the monster gives him. The slide is so easy, his body so open and willing and the slime slicking the way, the squelching sound of it fucking him echoing across the walls.

The jarring thrusts and the weight of the creature are slowly sliding him down the wall. Will uses all his strength to push back and raise his body higher, able to brace an elbow above his head before being pressed back against the barrier. It readjusts and resumes thrusting, this time the movements pressing far more insistently against his prostate. Will's eyes flutter open, mostly out of shock, and lock with Hannibal's, as burning as intense as the feeling deep inside of him-

Suddenly, he comes.

He isn't expecting it to stop here, he came several times before the first one started to lay, but when it shifts and he feels additional sensations dancing lightly across his body, it jolts him out of the dreamy haze his orgasm sent him into. With some difficulty he turns his gaze downwards- and finds more slender tentacles curling around him, gently feeling and exploring his body as the creature continues to fuck him.

This, this was new.

Will raises his head, both for comfort and because he knows it will be far too intense if he can see the motions as well. Just the thought of it, the feather light touches caressing him, rips a pleased groan from his throat. Hannibal, still watching, makes a faint noise of surprise.

Below, they ease his pants down further, allowing him to spread his legs more and encouraging him to do so, trailing up his thighs and curling around his cock and balls. They aren't making any sort of effort to pleasure him further, simply touching him curiously. Above they slip beneath his shirt and seem strangely frustrated with how it restricts their

movement. One hand, the one not braced above his head, falls down to undo the buttons. He only has two undone when suddenly, startlingly- the slender tentacles catch on and undo the next one for him. Will's breath stutters in his throat as the creature finishes unbuttoning his shirt. Again, his gaze meets Hannibal- the man looks both intensely pleased and intensely curious, eyes locked on where the extra appendages are working to undress Will. He has brought his arms back to his front, posture far more open with a hand tapping against the side of his chin, other arm wrapped around his middle to hold the former up.

The creature is trying to pull Will's shirt off of him entirely and his attention is redirected back to that. It comes off one arm at a time as he continues to brace himself against the wall and the moment the article is dropped the tentacles are on him again. When one slides over a nipple Will's breath hitches so it returns, rubbing it gently until it's pebbled beneath the touch. The second follows suit. Will's never found his nipples to be particularly sensitive but he supposed every inch of him must be right now. It feels good, sends shocks of arousal down his chest and straight to his cock.

Apparently the creature decides his upper body needs the attention more because all of the tentacles flock to it, running up his sides, dipping into his belly button, tracing the outline of his abdominal muscles. Will pushes back against the creature, pressing the top of his forehead to the wall between the bracket of his arms, giving it the room it wants to explore. He closes his eyes again and focuses on the faint pressure, the ghostly touches and how they contrast with the ovipositor that never once stopped fucking him. He feels tentacles slide up, over his collarbone, curve around his neck like ivy, curling around his jaw and sliding past the corners of his mouth to dip inside. They don't push deeper, only rest inside the warm cavern and hold his mouth open.

Then, a voice- "Will." His eyes snap open and he raises his head fully to look out at Hannibal, close enough to reach out and touch the transparent wall dividing them. He is looking at Will's mouth, where drool pools at the corners, cradled by the tentacles. "Is it feeding you anything, or pushing further inside?"

Will tries to respond, but he can't talk with his mouth held open like this so all he manages is a strangled, choked off noise.

"Is it too difficult to speak? Very well." Hannibal leans forwards and raps against the wall with his knuckles. "One for yes, two for no."

It's even harder to muster the mental strength to reply, but Will slowly pulls a palm away from the wall and taps against it twice.

"Hmm." Hannibal steps closer and lowers his voice. "How does it feel, Will? Does it feel good?"

With a pitiful whimper, Will slaps his palm against the wall once.

"Is it better than before?"

Slap.

“Would you do it again?”

Slap.

“If I let you, would you keep this secret?”

Slap.

Hannibal leans even closer still, voice dropping into a conspiratorial whisper. “Even if I told you all it eats is itself and other humans?”

This time, when Will whimpers, it’s closer to a sob. The tentacles in his mouth slide deeper, only just, curling around the backs of his molars as the ovipositor thrusts into him, swelling as it prepares to lay eggs. All around him the tentacles tighten and hold him in place.

He raises his hand and slaps the wall, once.

Slowly, Hannibal smiles, and with a whisper he says- “Good boy.”

Will comes harder than he has in his entire life and as his body contracts around the intrusion, the first egg pops in past his rim.

The ovipositor stays fully sheathed inside of him as the eggs slide in, one after the other. As they slip into him each bump presses *hard* against his prostate, wringing another orgasm out of his quivering body just before the pressure edges into too much. He can feel the eggs sitting heavy in his abdomen, feel the way his stomach swells as he is filled, feels each and every egg moving further and further inside of him. When one too many tips it over into pain Will lets out a choked-off cry and then suddenly- it stops, the ovipositor sliding out of him, the remaining eggs traveling back into the slug’s body. The tentacles slip out of his mouth, finally allowing him to close it, leaving trails of drool as they slide away. Finally, the slug pulls off of him and he collapses to the ground.

It retreats back into its lair and a moment of blinding panic shuts out everything else because the tentacles around his chest have *not* released him, it’s dragging him backwards into the darkness, he was promised he’d be released, Hannibal fucking *promised him*-

A sudden flash of light illuminates the area and the monster jerks backwards, releasing Will and retreating into the darkness, and then Hannibal’s hands are on him, hauling him back into the vestibule and locking the door into the slug’s habitat behind them. “Can you stand?”

Will cannot answer, struck dumb with panic and fear, so Hannibal simply lifts the man up across his arms and carries him out of the basement, locking every door behind him. He does not even stop to gather Will’s abandoned clothes.

Everything sort of fuses together until Will is jolted back to himself by the warm water he is gently lowered into, filling three-quarters of Hannibal’s luxuriously large bath tub. “You did very well, Will.” Hannibal murmurs praise as he arranges the boneless man, leaning back against the tub with his feet planted on the bottom.

The position is intolerable. “No,” Will groans, trying to turn on his own, and Hannibal helps him.

“What position will be the most comfortable for laying?”

At the words, Will shivers. He ends up kneeling again, hands gripping the edges of the bathtub so hard his knuckles go white. Hannibal considers him for a moment before adjusting his position; he’s scooted closer to the edge, back straightened and body lifted up so his ass hovers above the bottom of the tub. “Are you able to hold this?”

Will is trembling with the effort in short order but if he moves his hands to the sides of the tub, transferring some of the weight to his arms, it is manageable. “Like this,” he gasps, “but-”

But I can’t reach them like this, he had meant to say, interrupted by Hannibal plunging an arm into the water and reaching down, underneath Will, easily sliding his thumb and pointer inside and around the egg sitting just within. “Relax, Will,” he murmurs, lips nearly touching the man’s ear. “It may be possible to remove them in one piece but you must relax.”

Will is frozen in place, arms straining as he holds himself up on the edges of the bathtub. It’s possible he has never felt *less* relaxed in his entire life, something Hannibal can apparently tell based on his noise of displeasure. He eases out three eggs before Will’s body clenches down and separates the membrane.

“Will,” Hannibal sighs. “This cannot work. Kneel higher.”

With a soft noise of confusion, Will obeys, rising until his thighs are perpendicular with the floor and releasing his grip on the porcelain. “Now turn towards me.” Will cannot meet Hannibal’s gaze but he does slowly shuffle his body, swollen and tired, until he faces Hannibal.

A hand lands between his shoulder blades and pushes him forwards until he falls against Hannibal’s chest, hands flying up to grip the man’s shoulders in an effort to balance him. “Very good,” the man whispers, running the hand across the expanse of his back in a soothing gesture. “Just like this.”

The protest dies on the tip of Will’s tongue as the hand in the water finds his entrance again and fingers slip inside. When Hannibal pulls the eggs down they come far more easily. He extracts them slowly, one by one with a pinching motion, Will forcing his body to go loose and lax both against and around the other man. It feels nice, warm and comfortable, a constant rhythm pushing up against his prostate as the eggs push past it. He sighs happily into the other man’s neck.

And then he remembers where he is, what he’s doing, and his body tenses so suddenly Hannibal ceases his motions entirely. “Do not be ashamed,” Hannibal soothes, the hand above the water moving up to trace his spine, finally carding through curls and scratching gently. “If you enjoy this, you need not hide it from me.” He feels a reassuring pressure on the top of his head- Hannibal pressing a soft kiss there, he realizes with a jolt. “Simply enjoy it.”

So he does. He lets himself fall into the sensation, the low burning pleasure pulsing through him as Hannibal gently removes the eggs and the heavy pressure eases out from inside of him. It's not enough to make him come but it does draw soft noises of pleasure from him, happy sighs and contented hums. It goes on for what seems like an eternity and just when Will is starting to think he could live like this forever, he feels the last egg emerge.

"Was that the last?" Hannibal asks him, voice low and sweet. Against his neck, Will nods. "Then if you'll allow me one indulgence."

Will doesn't really have enough time to process the words when suddenly three of Hannibal's fingers are forced inside him and hooking forwards, pinpointing his prostate and pressing down on it. The hand in his hair tightens and pulls him back, further and further until he slips backwards into the tub, back colliding with the side as his ass slides further forwards and tilts up, knees knocking against the porcelain. "Hannibal, what-" He's cut off as Hannibal continues to finger him, fingers massaging him relentlessly underneath the film of eggs. All of his words choke off into groans.

Hannibal bends over him, leaning until their faces nearly touch, and then he's tipping Will's head up to meet his and their foreheads rest against each other, Hannibal's gaze burning into Will. His fingers are pushing into him expertly, rubbing circles across his prostate before pushing up and into it. There's nothing for Will to thrust into so instead he pushes *down,* encouraging Hannibal's touch, greedy for it.

He sees the man's lips part and for a moment he thinks Hannibal might kiss him but all he does is murmur "Come for me, Will."

Will sees stars, and then they flicker out and all he sees is darkness.

Will's body clenches around his fingers as the man comes, faces so close they share breath. It's even more alluring like this, the way he can look directly into the younger man's eyes as he shudders and quivers in his pleasure, see the exact moment that they unfocus and flutter closed as his body goes entirely limp in Hannibal's grip.

He had been expecting Will to pass out again and takes a moment to bury his face in the other man's neck, inhaling deeply. Will smells of sweat and cum and the strangely sweet-smelling slime. He pulls his fingers out from inside of the profiler, shoves his hand inside of his own pants and jerks himself off quickly and messily.

While he is pleased when Will swallows down his semen again, he had quite hoped the other man would be awake to enjoy it properly. Perhaps next time.

Hannibal bathes Will, takes care of the eggs (using the temporary pool from when he had just started, as he does not want to risk the wrath of the very much still alive slug in the enclosure), and then finishes cooking the meal he had halted. If Will had known more about the culinary arts, perhaps he would have noticed that Hannibal had not been cooking

anything in the first place, only prepping ingredients that could be quickly and easily stored away. This finished, he again grabs a book and settles down to read until Will wakes.

For whatever reason, Will is asleep for longer this time, though only by an hour. When he stirs Hannibal closes his book and sets it to the side. This next conversation would decide their fates, and he very much prefers a certain path. Hopefully Will feels the same.

Will is shaky when he sits up, very clearly groggy. When his eyes fall to his bare chest he gathers the sheets and wraps them tightly around his naked body, pulling his knees to his chest. A somewhat comical reaction, given the circumstances.

“Why am I naked,” is the first thing he asks.

“Would you like the practical answer or the selfish one?”

“Whichever one is the truth.”

“You are less likely to attempt to flee immediately if you are lacking clothes.”

Will peers at him, brain picking the words apart even in his exhausted state. “That’s not the truth.”

“Correct,” Hannibal answers with the ghost of a smile. “In the end, I simply prefer you this way.”

The man looks down at the sheets and starts picking at them with his fingernails. It will surely fray the threads and start them unraveling, but Hannibal supposes he can ignore it for now. “So what happens now?” It’s quite remarkable how calm Will is, since he clearly is expecting the worst. “Are you going to kill me?”

“I would prefer not to if it can be avoided.”

“Then what?” He lets the sheet fall out of his hands and tilts his head up, pointed towards Hannibal but not quite looking at him. “Lock me in the basement? Turn me into some sort of human seedbed for your fucking slugs?”

For someone who was trying to appear as disinterested as he could fake, he had managed to describe it in the filthiest way possible. A little shiver of pleasure rips through Hannibal’s frame at the thought. “That is what I would consider the worst case scenario.”

“Worse than killing me?”

“I do not currently consider killing you to be an option.”

That gets Will’s attention and he finally meets Hannibal’s gaze. “So option one is presumably you locking me in the basement to keep as breeding stock.” Hannibal gives him a short nod. “But you’re saying that’s not what you’d prefer, and I believe you. You wouldn’t have pulled me out if it had been. Where does that leave us with the other options?”

“In the end, I suppose there is only one. You return to your life and keep the secret, both of the existence of the slugs and all else that I have told you.”

“And in return, when they are mature I let them breed me,” Will finishes. “I’m still breeding stock but at least I’ll be free-range.” He tilts his head to the side, considering. “Why is that your preferred option? Seems way more dangerous for you.”

“I do enjoy your company, Will. Even a mind as exceptional as yours would not survive long-term confinement and… usage, such as this.”

“You’d prefer me willing.”

“And eager,” Hannibal amends. “Though I am not above manipulation, I will always prefer enthusiastic consent.”

“That’s putting it mildly,” Will mutters, finally dropping his gaze. “I- what are you getting out of this, exactly? More weird rape slugs?”

“Among other things, yes.”

“Humor me.”

Hannibal looks at Will sharply. “The same thing you will be getting out of it.”

Will’s eyes snap up to meet Hannibal’s, dark and shimmering. “Pleasure,” he murmurs, the word dripping from his mouth like honey.

A gurgling from Will’s stomach shatters the tension in the air, and he drops his head to his knees with a groan. “There is dinner,” Hannibal offers. It’s been warming in the oven ever since it was finished. “Truthfully, this time,” he adds upon seeing Will’s dark look.

“You gonna make me go down like this?”

He hands Will a robe, and the man takes it with a scowl.

Dinner is a mostly quiet affair, Will too lost in his own thoughts to be much of a conversationalist. Abruptly, he sets his fork down onto his plate and speaks. “How will you be able to tell if I’m honest?” Hannibal remains silent, waiting for the man to elaborate. “What’s going to stop me from agreeing to this only to immediately turn you in to Jack?”

Hannibal regards Will, silent for a moment. “Because you have shown yourself to me as thoroughly as I have to you. If you are lying, I will know.”

“Apparently I didn’t know you as well as I thought,” Will says quietly, eyes fixed on the table. Something about the way he says it actually, impossibly, sends a pang of guilt through Hannibal.

“You let your trust in me blind you. If you look deeper, you have known the truth of me since the moment we met.”

“Fat fucking lot of good that did me,” Will says through gritted teeth. “I trusted you, and in return you consider me disposable.” His hands tighten into fists.

“That is simply untrue.”

“Oh, really?” His words, and his smile alongside them, are sharp. “So if that… thing had made motions pointing towards eating me instead, you would have sprinted down to let me out, loaded with false reassurances and excuses?”

“Yes,” Hannibal answers simply.

Will blinks slowly, clearly not expecting that answer and unprepared for it. His face crumples back into exhaustion. “I don’t know if I can believe that. Not anymore.”

“Logically, what reason do I have to lie?”

“I don’t know!” Will’s voice jumps in volume, not a shout but close. “I don’t know what your reasons are for *anything* anymore.”

“What was your reason in the basement, when you opened the door and willingly let the creature inside?”

Will stiffens, and when he speaks he’s spitting the word like it’s poison on his tongue. “Pleasure.”

They do not speak for the remainder of the meal. Will follows Hannibal into the kitchen, prompting the psychiatrist to keep the knife block in his field of vision, but he only helps Hannibal with the dishes as usual. “You need an answer now, I’m assuming,” he says softly after the last dish is slotted into the drying rack.

“In the morning,” Hannibal corrects. “You may stay the night in a guest bedroom.”

“This isn’t- Hannibal, you know there’s no real choice here for me.”

“You have brought up a third option yourself; sneak out while I am asleep and report me to the authorities.”

“There’s no way you’d just let me leave like that.”

“I would,” Hannibal counters, “though I must warn you- they will return and find nothing to support your claims and it will be your word against mine. A battle you are not likely to win, as only one of us has a history of mental instability.”

Will recoils like he’s been struck. “That was low, even for you,” he hisses.

“It is simply the truth, Will. That would not be a desirable outcome for myself either but I will not hesitate to protect myself.”

“At least I wouldn’t have to deal with the monsters in your basement.”

“No,” Hannibal agrees. “Instead, you would have to deal with me.”

Will looks at him *really* looks at him, and then he’s suddenly taking a step back, eyes wide with both fear and understanding. For a brief, hanging moment, Hannibal thinks the man might actually bolt- but it passes and he simply turns to head upstairs. “Fine. I’m going to bed. We’ll talk in the morning.”

Hannibal lets him nearly reach the staircase before calling out. “Will? I am not sure if you were cognizant enough to notice.” The man halts, turning his head slightly to indicate that he is listening. “The slug, the one in the basement. It still has eggs.”

It’s obvious that the man is trying to hide his reaction but a shiver of pleasure still ripples through him. Without another word Will ascends the stairs.

Hannibal knows with total certainty what answer he will be given in the morning, and his lips curve up into a smile.

End Notes

Just in case it wasn't obvious enough... I want to make it very clear that Will chooses the 'keep the secret and have biannual crazy monster sex' option. This is set in stone because I may have gone a little bit wild and planned out far beyond this point. I would say 'if people are interested I may write more' but I'm going to be honest and say that if this gets continued it's for entirely selfish reasons. Either way, no promises.

Works inspired by this one

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